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SUNDAY READING.

THE

STORY

OF

JOSEPH AND HIS *BRETHREN.*

PART III.

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The STORY, &c.

Joseph discovers himself to his brethren.

When Joseph had made this propoſal of keeping Benjamin as his ſlave or ſervant, and of ſending the other ſons of Jacob home in peace to their father, Judah came forward and related all that had paſſed in the old man's houſe when they were bringing Benjamin away. "My father ſaid to us," obſerved Judah, "behold I have had two ſons and the one went from me," meaning Joſeph, "who is torn in pieces, and if ye take this alſo away, and miſchief befal him, ye ſhall bring down my grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave. Now therefore," ſays Judah, "let me abide inſtead of the

lad as a bondman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his Brethren. For how ſhall I go up to my ſeeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; and it ſhall come to paſs when he ſeeth that the lad is not with us that he will die.

" Then Joſeph could not refrain himſelf before all them that ſtood by him, and he bid every ſtranger to go out. Then Joſeph made himſelf known to his Brethren: and Joſeph wept aloud ſo that the Egyptians in the houſe over heard him. And Joſeph ſaid unto his Brethren, I am Joſeph. Doth my fa ther yet live? And his Brethren could not anſwer him for they were troubled at his preſence.

No wonder that Joſeph's Brethren were troubled at this ſpeech. O how bitter a thing is ſin. It cauſes trouble at thoſe moments which ought to be given up to joy. It ſpreads a gloom over our happieſt hours, and while thoſe who are not loaded with the ſame guilt are giving way to the moſt delight

ful feelings, it makes the man who is burthened in his conſcience to feel a double pang, to feel a pang, I mean, both on account of the ſin itſelf, and alſo on account of his regret at being unable to join in the general joy that is going forward.

Joſeph nevertheleſs comforts his Brethren. "Now therefore," ſays he, "be not grieved or angry with yourſelves, for God did ſend me before you to preſerve all our lives, ſo now it was not you that ſent me hither but God." How freely does Joſeph appear by this ſpeech, to forgive his Brethren! here is no malice no hatred, no ſpirit of revenge, no word even of reproof for all the evil they had endeavoured to do him; but the injured perſon is himſelf the comforter of thoſe who had tried to injure him. Here perhaps ſome one may be ready to ſay: "true, Joſeph did right to forgive his Brethren, for we are all bound to forgive them that treſſpaſs againſt us; methinks however, he might as well have ſaid ſomething to them of their ſin for the ſake of their own

good." I anſwer there is a time for all things, and that this was not the time for Joſeph to adminiſter reproof. His Brethren were likely juſt now to be caſt down through over-much ſorrow, and the thing they needed at this moment was therefore comfort rather than reproof. Your people who take all occaſions to reprove without regard to time or place, or circumſtances, though they may ſay they mean only to do good by it, are apt to be harſh people. they are only indulging their own ſpirit, and though they may perſuade themſelves that they are of a forgiving temper at bottom, in fact are not ſo much ſo as they think.

But I would obſerve further, that this extreme kindneſs of Joſeph would, in my opinion, tend to affect the hearts of his Brethren more than the ſevereſt reproof. "What (they would now ſay to themſelves) have we ſold for a ſlave a Brother ſo kind, ſo generous, ſo excellent as this! How little did we know of him when we took upon us to ſell him! how raſhly did we judge concerning his true character, and concern

ing his intention in thoſe words which gave us ſo much offence! He was a better man than we, though we all talked ſo much againſt him, and even thought him hardly fit to live." I would here beg all my readers to take care how they ſpeak evil of perſons without due knowledge of their character. Eſpecially I would adviſe you to beware of judging any one, on account of his having ſaid or done ſomething which happens to wound your own pride, or to give pain merely to yourſelf. He may be a good man on the whole, even though he ſhould have erred in this particular, and you may err more by the revenge you take for what he has ſaid that is offenſive to you, than he has done by ſaying it. Take heed then leſt ſome day or other ſhould come when the very perſon whom you are ſet againſt, ſhall have his character cleared before all the world in ſpite of every thing you have ſaid againſt him. Take heed leſt you ſhould be proved to have been the greater ſinner of the two on that day when you ſhall each of you appear before God and all his holy angels. O

that we could all learn ſomething of this kind, and affectionate, forbearing temper of Joſeph. He was as remarkable for it as he was for conquering thoſe ſecret temptations which I before ſpoke of.

Joſeph having diſcovered himſelf to his Brethren, is now impatient that they ſhould go to his father, "Haſte ye," ſays he, "and go up to my father, and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith thy ſon Joſeph, God hath made me Lord of all Egypt.—Come down, tarry not, and thou ſhalt dwell in the land of Goſhen, and thou ſhalt be near unto me, thou and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks and thy herds, and all that thou haſt, and there will I nouriſh thee, for there are yet five years of famine to come." "And Joſeph fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck." "Moreover he kiſſed all his Brethren, and wept upon them, and after that his Brethren talked with him." "And the fame hereof was heard in Pharaoh's houſe, and it pleaſed Pharaoh and his ſervants. And Pharaoh ſaid, Bring

your father and your houſehold: take waggons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father and come. And they did ſo. And Joſeph gave to each of them changes of raiment, and he ſent to his father ten aſſes laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten more aſſes laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way."

Accordingly Jacob having been invited by his ſons, and having alſo been invited by his ſons, and having alſo been encouraged by God in a dream, arrived in Egypt; and all the ſouls that went with him, beſides his ſons wives, were ſixty and ſix.

"And Joſeph made ready his chariot and went to meet his father and fell on his neck and wept a long time. And Jacob ſaid, Now let me die ſince I have ſeen thy face, that thou art yet alive. And Joſeph brought in Jacob his father and ſet him before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh ſaid unto Jacob, "How old art thou?" And Jacob ſaid unto Pharaoh

" The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." And Jacob bleſſed Pharoah. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt ſeventeen years, and he died."

" Now when Joſeph's Brethren ſaw that their father was dead, they ſaid, Joſeph will peradventure hate us, and will requite us for all the evil that we did unto him. And they ſent a meſſage to Joſeph, ſaying that their father before he died commanded them to requeſt of Joſeph, that he would forgive their treſpaſs againſt him. And Joſeph wept to think that they ſhould ſpeak thus unto him. And Joſeph ſaid, 'Fear not. As for you, indeed, ye thought evil againſt me: but God meant it for good. Now therefore I will nouriſh you and your little ones.' And he comforted them and ſpake kindly unto them. And Joſeph lived an hundred and ten years. And he ſaid to his Brethren, God will ſurely viſit you, and bring you out of

this land into the land which he promiſed to Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob. And Joſeph died,"

Thus ends the hiſtory of Joſeph. I have already obſerved that one of the chief things to be learned from it is the doctrine of a particular Providence. " It was not you" (as Joſeph ſaid very juſtly to his Brethren) that ſent me into Egypt; but it was God, that is, it was not you only. Men indeed were the inſtruments, and men are accountable to God for every part of their own conduct juſt as much as if there was no Providence in the caſe. Still, however, though man may act as he pleaſes, yet God over-rules all things ſo as to bring about his own purpoſes. God in this inſtance had a plan in view. He had made a promiſe to Abraham, the grandfather of Jacob, who was the father of Iſaac, that from him the Savior ſhould come, for that " in his ſeed all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed." In fulfilment of this promiſe, Iſaac and Jacob were born. I ſhould here remark by the way, that to Jacob the name of

Iſrael was given, ſo that when the Scriptures ſpeak of the Iſraelites, it is the ſame thing, as if they ſaid the children of Jacob. Of theſe there were twelve tribes, every one of the ſons of Iſrael becoming a father to a whole tribe. Theſe Iſraelites after a time were brought out from Egypt, having been very ill treated there by King Pharaoh, and they became a great and famous people; for God wrought many maricles in the midſt of them, and gave them the law of the Ten Commandments, and ſet up his worſhip among them, and ſeparted them from the reſt of the world, which continued in ignorance of God and of the Scriptures. It was from theſe Iſraelites (or Jews, as they were afterwards called) that the promiſed Savior came. And bleſſed be God, this Savior is not the Savior of the Jews only, but He is now preached to us, "upon whom the ends of the world are come." How important then is the ſtory of Joſeph in this view. It was a neceſſary link in the great chain of Providence, and this chain reaches from the beginning of the world even to the end of it. Nor is it with the life of Joſeph only, that the

Providence of God concerns itſelf. Your life and mine, and all the various events of it, great and ſmall, from our birth unto our dying hour, are equally under the divine direction' The ſame divine direction. The ſame God who ſent the Iſhmaelites to the pit's mouth, when Joſeph was ſo near being left to periſh there, the ſame God who gave Joſeph favor in the ſight of Potiphar his maſter, and who afterwards delivered him out of priſon and made him ruler over all Egypt, appoints alſo to us the bounds of our habitation, and orders our whole lot in life. If then, like Joſeph, we are ſerving God, let us not fear to truſt him, and though we ſhould fall occaſionally into ſtraits as Joſeph did, yet let us hope when the end of our days ſhall come, and when the whole of our ſtory ſhall be told that we ſhall be able to trace the Lord's goodneſs and mercy even in the moſt afflictive circumſtances of our lives, as we have now been doing in the caſe of Joſeph.

Nor let us wonder at the vaſt confuſion and diſorder which we ſometimes ſee in the world in general. Let not our

faith fail us if now and then the wicked ſhould ſeem every where to proſper, and the whole company of the righteous ſhould come under adverſity. The hiſtory of Joſeph ſhews that it is the plan of Providence ſometimes to withdraw in appearance, his protection and favor from his own ſervants, and to put off to a future ſeaſon the evil day which is coming upon ſinners. Soon however the time will come, when all that has been crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and all that has been dark in Providence ſhall be cleared up.

The ſtory of Joſeph, as we alſo obſerved, is but a ſmall part of Scripture; it fills but a few pages of that large and comprehenſive volume, being connected however with events which go before and with thoſe which follow after. Juſt ſo methinks the hiſtory of this whole globe of ours is but like a ſingle leaf in a great volume, and it cannot be fully underſtood until the dealings of God with all his various creatures ſhall be made known, until the whole book of his Providence ſhall be opened, and until all thoſe events, both paſt and future,

with which God's government of this world may be connected, ſhall be fully revealed. Let us wait therefore, in the exerciſe of faith and hope, remembering, as the Apoſtle ſays, that while we are here below, "We know but in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.—For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly; but then face to face. Now we know in part; but then ſhall we know, even as alſo we are known."

THE

HISTORY

OF

DILIGENT DICK;

OR,

Truth will out though it be hid in a Well.

A false witness shall not go unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.

DON'T be frightened, Reader! Although I ſet out with a text, I am not going to preach a ſermon, but to tell a ſtory. On the right ſide of Marſhmoor common, and not more than five hundred yards out of the turnpike road, ſtood a lone cottage, inhabited by one Richard Rogers, a day-labourer, commonly called DILIGENT DICK. Though poor, he was as much noted for his honeſty as for the care and induſtry with which he had brought up a large family

in a very decent manner. About fifteen years ago,, in the month of January, there ſuddenly fell a deep ſnow, attended by ſuch a high wind, that many travellers loſt their lives in it. When all on a ſudden, as Rogers and his family were crouding round a handful of fire, to catch a laſt heat before they went to-bed, they heard a doleful cry of 'Help! help! for God's ſake help!' —Up ſtarted Rogers in an inſtant, when clapping the end of a farthing candle into a broken horn lanthorn, and catching up his ſtaff, out he ſallied, directing his ſteps towards the ſpot from whence the cries came. In one of the ſand-pits he found a gentleman who had fallen from his horſe, and was nearly buried in the ſnow. Rogers, though with much difficulty, at length dragged him out, and after ſecuring the horſe, conveyed them both home.

The gentleman appeared elderly, and ſeemed almoſt periſhed with cold; for a long time he was quite ſpeechleſs, his jaws appeared locked, and it was only by inward groans they could per-

ceive he had any remains of life in him, ſo benumbed and ſtiffened was he with cold. After they had rubbed his limbs for ſome time before the fire, the gentleman by degrees recovered himſelf, and began to thank Rogers and his wife, whom he ſaw buſied about him, as well as his children. 'Sir,' ſaid Betty Rogers, 'although we be poor in pocket, we may nevertheleſs be kind in heart.' Here the ſtranger after fetching a deep ſigh, ſaid, 'If his life were granted him, he hoped it would be in his power to reward them for their kindneſs.' Rogers replied, 'that what he had done for him, he would have done for his worſt enemy.' Here the gentleman groaned heavily, ſaying he had been long ſick himſelf, and that he could not enough admire the healthy looks of Rogers's children.

'Bleſſed be God, ſir,' ſaid Rogers, 'although my family is numerous, I never paid a ſhilling for doctor's ſtuff in my life, nor do I even know the price of a coffin; if my wealth is ſmall, my wants are few, and though I know I am a ſinner, and need daily repentance,

yet my conſcience is quiet, for I have knowingly done wrong to no man, nor would I forfeit my peace of mind, ſir, to become the richeſt man in Old England. I am not covetous of wealth, ſir, ſince I have ſeen how little comfort they often enjoy who poſſeſs it; the honeſt man, ſir, ſleeps ſoundly on the hardeſt bed, whilſt he who has "made too much haſte to be rich," may lie down on the ſofteſt bed with an aching heart, but ſhall not be able to find reſt.' All this while Betty Rogers ſat puffing and blowing the fire with a pair of broken-noſed bellows in order to boil her kettle, to make the gentleman a diſh of her coarſe bohea tea, as ſhe had no ſpirits or liquor of any kind except ſpring water, to offer him: ſhe alſo toaſted a bit of bread, though ſhe had no butter to rub over it; this ſhe hoped the gentleman would excuſe, ſince many of the farmers were ſo extortionate in their price of butter and cheeſe, that ſome of their labourers live, for the greater part of their time, on bread only, or a few potatoes.

Here the gentleman attempted to partake of Betty's tea and toaſt, when all at once he began to tremble all over ſo exceedingly, that he begged ſhe would ſet it down for the preſent, for if he was to attempt to ſwallow it, he was certain it would choke him. 'It is but cold comfort to be ſure, ſir,' ſaid Rogers, 'we have to offer you; but nevertheleſs we muſt hope you will take the will for the deed. I ſuppoſe you are very rich and yet you now ſee, that all the wealth in the world cannot help a man in certain ſituations. I had a pretty education, ſir, and I remember when I was a boy at ſchool to have read the hiſtory of a great king, who, when harraſſed by the enemy, and being overcome with thirſt, was thankful to a poor ſoldier who brought him a draught of cold water in his helmet which he drank off greedily, ſaying, that amidſt all his pomp he had never taſted ſuch luxury as that cup of water yielded him. So you ſee, ſir, what ſtrange ups-and downs there are in life: therefore people of all degrees ſhould be careful to keep pride out of their hearts, ſince the moſt proſperous man to-day, may be

thankful for the poor man's assistance to-morrow.' 'And after all,' cried Betty Rogers, 'high and low, rich and poor, should pray daily for God's grace, since that alone can give peace to their poor souls when the hour of affliction cometh. But, bless me,' cried she, clasping her hands, 'what shall we do, our last inch of candle is burnt out.' 'Then,' said Rogers, we must content ourselves, my betty, with passing the rest of the night in the dark.' The gentleman said he must be content to do as they did. 'Many is the dark night, sir,' said Richard, 'have I sat by my dame's bed-side when she has been sick or lying-in, endeavouring to make up to her in kindness what I could not provide for her in comforts, when I have not had the least glimmering of light, but what came from the twinkling stars through our tattered casement.

'Amidst all our poverty, sir, we have ever been the happiest pair in each other. It is a brave thing, sir, to be able, by the grace of God, to drive

pride out of the cottage when poverty enters in; for ſin is the father of ſhame. A man, ſir, amidſt the extremeſt poverty, yet may ſtand high in the favour of God, by patience, prayer, and a hearty faith in his Redeemer.

Here the ſtranger appeared under very great diſtreſs both of body and mind; he ſhivered all over as if he had an ague fit upon him, and by a little blaſt, which was juſt then lighted up, they perceived he looked as pale as death; they begged him to lay down on their bed, ſaying, 'it was very clean, though it was ill provided with ſheets and blankets.' 'O my good people,' cried the gentleman, 'your goodneſs will be the death of me; the kindneſs of your hearts proves to me the unkindneſs of my own: No, go you to bed, and let me ſit here till morning. 'That,' Rogers ſaid, 'they could not do.' The gentleman then replied, he ſhould be glad if Rogers would give him a little hiſtory of himſelf and family to beguile the time.

'That I will do moſt readily, ſir,' ſaid he, , if *ſo be* it will oblige you in the leaſt.—My name is Rogers, although

my neighbours are pleaſed to call me DILIGENT DICK. I have a wife and ſeven children; I riſe with the lark, and lie down with the lamb. I never ſpend an idle penny, or an idle moment; though my family is numerous, my children were never a burden to me. That good woman there, ſir,' pointing to his wife, 'puts her hand to the labouring oar: ſhe brings up our children at home in ſuch a ſober induſtrious manner, that our neighbours, as ſoon as they are capable of earning a penny, are glad to take them off our hands. I am proud to ſay, ſir, they have no little pilfering tricks, as many children have. "Train up a child in the way he ſhould go," is our way, ſir, and I am certain both my wife and I have felt the benefit of the text, for our children are kind and affectionate towards each other, dutiful to us their parents, and obliging and civil to their employers. Ah, ſir, the richeſt man in England is not happier than I am, when I return home of an evening, wearied by the heat and labour of the day, to be received with looks of kindneſs by my wife, as ſhe is preparing our

frugal ſupper, whilſt two or three of my little babies climb my knees to fondle me round the neck.' Again the traveller groaned piteouſly; but Rogers went on. 'I was born to a pretty fortune, ſir, but by the villainy of my father's brother I loſt my inheritance. My uncle, Charles Rogers, through the indulgence of his mother, proved to be a very malicious child, and as he grew up to man's eſtate, the faults of the child became hardened vices in the man, inſomuch that his wicked behaviour broke his mother's heart, My own dear mother, ſir, like the parents of Samuel, taught me betimes to fear the Lord; yet my grandfather was ſo much offended at my father's marrying her, that he made his will, and cut him off with a ſhilling. He and my poor mother died within a twelvemonth of each other, and left me pennyleſs by the time all their debts were paid. I was then about twelve years of age, and my Betty's father kindly took me to live with him. He ſoon after received a meſſage from my grandfather, with a preſent of twenty guineas to pay for my board, ſaying,

was very ill, and that he would ſend me when he was better. The next ews I heard of him was that he was ead; and though he had promiſed to ake a will in my favour, yet none was be found, although one of his old ſer- ants declared he had ſigned a great eet of parchment, which a lawyer had een writing by my grandfather's bed- de. Every body now judged my un- le Charles very hardly, as having made way with this laſt will, becauſe he rought forward the old one, wherein ny grandfather had left his whole pro- perty to him. Some kind friends of my ather wiſhing to ſee juſtice done by me, commenced an action againſt both him and the lawyer, who was known to be a rogue, and ready to do any dirty work for money.

'The trial was brought on at the next aſſizes, when my uncle employed ſuch arts in ſecuring the witneſſes, that a ver- dict was given againſt me. After ſome months, however, my uncle ſent me twenty guineas, that I might be put ap- prentice to a carpenter; but deſired he might never be troubled with me again.

Accordingly I was bound out; but m
maſter proved one of thoſe negligen
tradeſmen who loved his eaſe better tha
his work: by neglecting his buſines
his buſineſs began to neglect him. H
broke at length for a conſiderable ſum
money, and was thrown into priſon
where he died ſoon after of the jail di
temper; ſo that at the end of the thir
year of my apprenticeſhip, I was once
more left to ſeek for bread. I returne
again to my Betty's father, who got m
employment under his maſter. I wa
about one and twenty when I married
and then I and my wife followed my
maſter's ſon into this country, who had
an eſtate left him, and with him I have
worked ever ſince, and with truth I can
ſay, I have never received an unkind
word from him, for he never ſaw me
drunk, not even at ſheep-ſheering or at
harveſt-home. My Betty's pious meek-
neſs, ſir, has ſweetened all my toil,
whilſt the dutiful behaviour of my chil-
dren has fulfilled every wiſh of my
heart. Whether my cruel uncle be dead
or living I know not; but be it as it may
I do not envy him his ill-gotten wealth,

and I can only pray that he may repent of his ſins, before ſickneſs brings him to a death-bed; for it is a horrible thing, ſir, to have the conſcience racked with deſpair, when the body is afflicted with pain.

'Look, Richard,' cried Betty Rogers, 'you are talking on, and on, whilſt I am ſure the poor gentleman is going into a fit.' The gentleman at that inſtant gave a deep groan, and would have fallen from his chair if Rogers had not caught him in his arms; his wife ſnatched up the little mug of tea, which ſhe ſtill kept warm in the aſhes, ſhe put it to the ſtranger's lips, begging him to take a ſip, as ſhe was ſure it would do him good; whilſt her huſband, on the other hand, begged him to eat a bit of the toaſt. The gentleman could but juſt make ſhift to ſay, 'my good people you are too kind to me.' 'Not at all, ſir,' ſaid Rogers, 'we do no more for you than we would for our worſt enemy.' 'O God,' cried the traveller, 'what will become of me? my ſight fails me, my fleſh trembles, and my joints ache; I freeze and burn at the ſame moment.'

'Poor dear gentleman!' ſaid Betty Rogers, wiping her eyes, 'I am afraid he is going lightheaded; do pray, ſir, drink a drop more of the tea,' 'and eat a bit of the toaſt alſo,' anſwered Richard. 'I dare not taſte it, my good friends,' replied the gentleman, 'for I feel as if if it would choke me were I to attempt it; but tell me, I pray, is there not ſomewhere a text of Scripture which ſays, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink; for, in ſo doing, thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his head?"—O Rogers, Rogers, thou wilt ſay indeed thou art heaping coals of fire on my head, when thou art told I am thy wicked uncle Charles!'

Here Rogers and his wife had nearly ſwooned away with aſtoniſhment. 'Then I am heartily glad to ſee you, uncle,' cried Rogers, 'and if you have really done me wrong I forgive you with all my ſoul, as I hope to be forgiven myſelf.' Here Mr. Rogers' grief appeared ſo great, he ſeemed almoſt beſide himſelf. 'But do not be ſurpriſed,' cried he, as ſoon as he could ſpeak, 'to ſee me here; it is not by accident; this is

he ſecond attempt I have made, Rogers, o viſit thy humble dwelling; but more of that hereafter.' In about a quarter of an hour, Mr. Rogers, after ſhedding bitter tears, ſpoke as follows:

'My neighbours, Richard, has long believed me to be a very happy man, ſeeing that I poſſeſſed an abundance of the good things of this world, but what man ever yet was happy, who carried ſecret guilt in his bo om? Thy grandfather, on his death-bed, became duly ſenſible of his unforgiving ſpirit towards thy poor father, for no other crime had he committed than having married a woman who brought him no money; he therefore reſolved, that the laſt buſineſs of his life ſhould be doing an act of juſtice towards thee his only ſon; accordingly he ſent for his attorney, made a new will, bequeathing thee that property which he would have given thy father had he been living! he alſo deſired much to ſee thee, which I took eſpecial care to prevent, fearing thy youth and innocence would win upon his love. After his deceaſe, by the ad-

vice, and with the assistance of this rogue of an attorney, we burnt my fathers last will, and produced that which he had made many years before, wherein he had cut thy father off with a shilling. The deed was no sooner done, than I felt, as it were, all the torments of hell raging in my soul, it was done at the very moment his people were laying my aged father's body in the coffin.' Here Mr. Rogers grew so faint he could not go on.

'Merciful Heaven,' cried Richard, with hands and eyes uplifted, 'How covetousness hardens the heart of man! what a safe-guard has my poverty been to me! riches might have ensnared my soul too.' As soon as Mr. Rogers could speak he went on. 'Thou hast just mentioned, Richard, the trial that was brought forward after my father's decease, respecting his will, when the attorney to whom I was to pay five hundred pounds for the villainous part he had acted, swore he never had made a second will for my father, and I swore to the same effect; yes, Richard, I swore upon the Holy Bible—that Bible which

pronounces a deadly curſe on him who ſwears falſly; yea, I called on that eternal God to witneſs a lie, before whom I muſt ſhortly be judged for it, and now my grey hairs are brought to the brink of the grave, I begin to feel, that the ſting of death is ſin; very miſerable has been my life, and very terrible no doubt will be my death. Being now iu poſſeſſion of a clear 400l. a year, I began to fancy all things would go proſperouſly and ſwimmingly on; I bought, and I ſold, and no mans traffic ſeemed to turn to better account; but no ſucceſs in life, Richard, could blunt the ſting of guilt within me; when I laid me down to reſt at night, I feared to truſt myſelf to ſleep, leſt I ſhould betray my ſecret; and my very dreams became ſo diſturbed, that the ſervants would often hear my ſcreams at the other end of the houſe. One night I dreamt I was going to be executed for deſtroying a will; and the next I fancied I was going to be tranſported for perjury.

All my neighbours believed me to be a happy man, only becauſe they ſaw me a proſperous one. My cove-

tous deſires were never ſatisfied, and whilſt I went on heaping up guinea upon guinea, my mind was hourly afflicted with the dread of poverty. My wife all of a ſuden grew melancholy, and by an accident ſhe fell into the pond and was drowned; when my ſon came of age I ſettled him on the eſtate which my father in his will had left to thee; he was a diſſolute young man, and coming home one night very much intoxicated with liquor, he fell acroſs the bed with a lighted candle in his hand, which inſtantly ſet fire to the curtains, and he periſhed in the flames; one of my daughters turned out very vicious, and the other died of a broken heart from the cruel uſage of her huſband. Beſides all theſe trials, I had another very ſevere one from the attorney, who was always racking me for money, and telling me he would turn King's evidence, and impeach me, if ever I refuſed him. At length, without a moment given him for repentance, he was ſuddenly carried off by a paralytic ſtroke. My ſpirits began to revive after his death, as my crime now was known only to

myſelf; but peace can never dwell in the guilty boſom. I left off going to church, for there my condemnation ſtared me full in the face. The Ten commandments were written in golden letters on each ſide of the Altar; then my own wicked conſcience would whiſper me, how many of thoſe ſacred commands I had broken, I had taken the holy name of God in vain, I had prophaned the Sabbath, I had been undutiful to my parents, I HAD BORNE FALSE WITNESS AGAINST MY NEIGHBOUR." At length, however, ſo grievobly burdened was my conſcience, that I reſolved occaſionally to tend church, hoping it would be a kind of ſponge to rub out ſome of my ſins. One Sunday I remember our parſon told us in his ſermon there can be no real repentance for ſin, without forſaking it; adding moreover, that if any of his congregation had defrauded his neighbour of aught, he entreated them, if ever they hoped their ſouls would find mercy in the day of grace, that they ſhould make reſtitution, before death ſhould cut them off from the land of the

living, ſince there was no repentance in the grave.

Theſe words ſo worked upon my mind, that I fell ſick, and during my illneſs, I called on Heaven to witneſs, that if life were granted me, I would reſtore to thee what I had ſo unjuſtly kept from thee; but as my health returned, ſo did my good reſolutions vaniſh away again; I cheated myſelf with the thought that I might yet enjoy life many years; thus I went on till the reſtleſs working of my conſcience almoſt overpowered me, and having enquired out the place of thy abode, mounted my horſe and ſet out with the reſolution to diſcover the whole hiſtory of my villainy to thee; but when I came within ſight of thy cottage, I found my principles were not ſtrong enough to bring me to confeſs myſelf a rogue before thee; I turned my horſe about, and went home again. I next took to hard drinking to ſtifle reflection, but all would not do, for ſtill the gnawings of a guilty conſcience devoured me; as my health declined, the ſtronger the fear of death came upon me.

Again I reſolved once more to go in ſearch of thee, and earneſtly did I pray to God to aſſiſt my endeavours, and the nearer I approached to thy little dwelling, the more was my courage ſtrengthened to proceed. The ſudden fall of ſnow coming on was the cauſe of my being benighted, and miſſing my way I fell into the pit; but ah, Richard, it ſeems as if Heaven had appointed thee to preſerve my life in this world, and my ſoul from deſtruction in the next, by pointing out to me the only path in which a penitent ſinner can tread with ſafety. It is not for mortal man, Richard, to tell what agony of mind I have endured this night: thy kindneſs and that of thy wife nearly overcame me, and I the leſs feared to make a diſcovery of myſelf to thee, when I found every action of thy daily life was governed by the principles of religion: I know Chriſtianity alone can teach men heartily to forgive their enemies.

'O Rogers! Rogers! how bleſt is thy condition when compared with mine: if thou art poor, thou art honeſt; in addition to a quiet conſcience thou

haſt a healthful and happy family ſmiling around thee. I abound in wealth it is true but my health is gone, I have loſt my reſt and I carry in my boſom the ſharp goadings of a wounded ſpirit which I am unable to bear.

Here Mr. Rogers finiſhed his truly melancholy hiſtory, at which both Rogers and his wife ſhed abundance of tears, and at the ſame time they did all in their power to comfort him. The next day Rogers attended his uncle home, when he ſent for the clergyman of his paaiſh, who was a very experienced Chriſtian: Rogers made a full confeſſion of his guilt to him, hoping he would give him his beſt advice how to fit and prepare himſelf for another world. Mr. Rogers lived but a few weeks after this, and died full of horror at the ſins of his paſt life, and earneſtly imploring mercy from the Saviour of ſinners.

How myſterious are the ways of Providence, who in an inſtant can bring the moſt ſecret plots to light! and how does the eye of God purſue us; "if we ſay peradventure the darkneſs ſhall cover us, then ſhall our night be turned into day; the darkneſs and light to him are both alike."

THE END.

☞ Next week will be publiſh'd The Gameſter.